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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR EUR/CACEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [AM](#)

SUBJECT: NO POMEGRANATE REVOLUTION IN SIGHT

[11](#). (U) Sensitive But Unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

SUMMARY

[12](#). (SBU) One year after an opposition rally was forcibly broken up Armenia is decidedly not on the verge of a "Pomegranate Revolution." With a fractured opposition, lack of a clear opposition leader, a steadily improving economy and a government with few fault lines we do not anticipate a change of power in Armenia before the next scheduled elections in 2007 and 2008. End Summary.

PRESIDENT COMMENTS ON ARMENIAN STABILITY

[13](#). (SBU) Mindful of the anniversary of last April's events, President Kocharian (as well as a number of other government officials) commented on the unlikely prospects for revolution in Armenia. Kocharian noted that the conditions are not ripe for a revolution in Armenia, "regardless of what its color is." Speaking to students April 11, Kocharian told them that the situations in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine "have nothing in common with the situation in Armenia where no one doubts the authorities' resolve, the change of generations has already taken place, there have been no oppositionists dismissed from their posts and the next elections will be held in Armenia in two years." Throwing a sop to opposition leaders, Kocharian insisted that there has been no revolution "not because of the fact that our opposition is too bad, but because the situation in Armenia is better, and state authorities are more effective."

THINK TANK DOWNPLAYS IMMINENT REVOLUTION

[14](#). (SBU) In a late February roundtable on the topic "Revolutions in Color: ... Who Comes Next?" sponsored by the Caucasus Media Institute the organizers (largely distinctly unsympathetic to the current government) agreed that revolution in Armenia was unlikely. They noted that a successful revolution depends on a number of factors that are lacking in Armenia: a significant triggering event (such as elections); a fairly unified opposition with a charismatic leader; and a weak government. With the military and police unwaveringly supportive of the current government, participants noted that Kocharian's administration was anything but weak.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS POINT TO PROBLEMS

[15](#). (SBU) In public comments earlier this spring, long-time opposition leader and one-time presidential candidate Vazgen Manukian blamed the opposition itself for its lack of traction with ordinary Armenians. Manukian admitted that as long as the opposition had no clear leader, any attempt at forced regime change was doomed to fail.

[16](#). (SBU) Stepan demirchian, one of the leaders of the opposition Justice Bloc and wanna-be opposition leader admitted privately to us that unless the government slips up and hands its opponents an opportunity the opposition would have to wait until elections. Demirchian hoped that if the GOAM managed to come to agreement on proposed changes to the Constitution or electoral code, the opposition could turn the subsequent referendum into a plebiscite on President Kocharian's "legitimacy."

COMMENT: NOT IN ARMENIA

17. (SBU) Despite persistent discussion of a possible "Pomegranate Revolution" we simply see little chance of forced regime change in Armenia. With a steadily (albeit slowly) improving economy, a fractured and fractious opposition and a president firmly in control of key governmental elements we expect to see the next regime change only with the next elections in 2007 and 2008.
EVANS